

# Colourblind Meritocracy Will Not Defeat Wokeism, by Keith Woods - The Unz Review

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In recent weeks, the hot topic of discussion in the dissident right has been the merits of meritocracy. More specifically, debate has centered around the question of whether supporting a “colourblind meritocracy” in Western, multiracial societies may be a good way to restore the dominance of White people over their homelands and curtail the radical left. This would involve supporting more establishment rightists and centrists in their quest to fight wokeism, and restoring some of the principles of classical liberalism which these people believe were responsible for the West’s success.



Let me preface this by saying this is a discussion that applies to multicultural societies that are more racially, and less ethnically constructed than European

nations. In Europe, I generally do not agree with politically identifying with White over the individual ethnic identity of the nation in question, and I do not think this question is even very relevant since the priority for these nations should be preventing their transition into multiracial societies. Asserting the sovereignty of native European ethnic groups over their ancestral homelands is argument enough in any country in Europe, and getting dragged into discussions of racial differences is unnecessary, except to demonstrate things like disproportionate rates of crime and delinquency for non-European immigrants and bolster arguments against continuing immigration from outside Europe. For Whites in the United States, Canada, and Australia though, questions of race and White identity are far more relevant.

What sparked this debate was reaction to Harvard's firing of Claudine Gay, its first black president, over allegations of plagiarism. This followed a months-long campaign by elites – spearheaded by hedge fund manager [Bill Ackman](#) and comprising mostly Jews – to have Gay fired over her supposed failure to tackle antisemitism at Harvard. As I wrote about [recently](#), October 7th was a big wakeup call for many Jews in the West, especially progressives who realised the wokeism they had supported could lead to a situation where a majority of educated young people view Zionist Jews like them as oppressors.

In his quest to oust Ms. Gay, Ackman and his fellow Zionist power-brokers were aided by “anti-woke” activists like [Christopher Rufo](#), who helped to compile over 50 instances of alleged plagiarism in Gay's academic works. While Harvard initially stood by her, she eventually resigned. Most of the online right celebrated this as an obvious win. Here was a clear instance of someone who had benefited from an anti-White system being exposed as a fraud; an apparent example of a major success story of diversity becoming a very public embarrassment for the champions of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).





For some on the right, this represented not just a brief opportunity for gloating over the left, but the first signpost of a promising path forward. Cynical as we may be about the rhetoric of a James Lindsay or Christopher Rufo, they had delivered a real blow to the establishment, and with the help of backers like Ackman, were now making the intellectual challenge to wokeism more mainstream than it had ever been. At the same time, there is an apparent trend of rich, White elites becoming concerned that wokeism will lead to a “competency crisis” due to DEI hiring policies selecting for things other than merit. Elon Musk has been [broadcasting](#) this concern to his millions of followers on X, and likely represents a growing number of capitalist innovators who now perceive a realistic threat to their projects from the left’s social agenda.

On the day of Gay’s resignation, Twitter personality Bronze Age Pervert affirmed this strategy of embracing colourblind meritocracy as the way forward, given that truths about race differences are unpalatable to anyone but a small subsection of the online right. BAP argues:

While for the sake of truth I think facts about racial disparities should be discussed, it’s not good at all politically. In fact it’s impossible in the present circumstances. Only a myth of race blindness is workable...The only solution in [the] short run is race blindness, stopping and reversing all racialization of politics and society...The “HBD position” is an impossibility politically and culturally today.



Many of BAP's followers rushed to defend this argument, urging the right to embrace a spirit of pragmatism and build on the wins offered by the growing fatigue over wokeism and DEI policies. Others have expressed great optimism about the prospect of elite Jews, who exercise great influence over the direction of politics in the United States, turning on DEI policies and empowering the anti-woke crusaders. The argument put forward by nationalists arguing for this strategy is this:

1. Although race realism contains facts which undermine egalitarianism, such facts will be rejected by most conservatives who oppose wokeism.
2. Because of the reality of racial differences, we know that in a colourblind meritocratic order White people would naturally dominate institutions again.
3. Opposing wokeism with meritocratic ideals is popular with a majority of people, and has growing support from elites.
4. Therefore, the most feasible way to achieve White dominance over our homelands is to support colourblind meritocracy.

Further supporting their case, it does seem like the American Conservative movement is increasingly finding the courage to strike at the root of DEI policies. Taking their cue from right-wing intellectuals who have traced wokeism to Civil Rights law. "Repeal the Civil Rights Act" is an increasingly common demand



among centre-right influencers, as is the willingness to challenge the legacy of figures like Martin Luther King. Relative to where political discourse was a decade ago, this *is* quite radical. If there was one thing Republicans and Democrats agreed on, it was living up to the ideals of Martin Luther King. So the right is more willing than ever to throw out the entire legacy of civil rights law, affirmative action, forced integration... what's not to love?

### **The need for an honest approach**

Much of the optimism around this assumes elite Jews like Ackman are really turning on DEI policies in a way that will benefit White people. Ackman has supported these DEI policies for years, but perhaps his eyes have been opened since October 7th. Even if elite Jews are pushing back primarily because of their concern about antisemitism, White people will still benefit from this, and perhaps even make alliances with these elites. This is similar to nationalists seeing promise in Western states talking about deporting Hamas sympathisers since October 7th, an apparent opportunity to normalise repatriation – a policy that would benefit the White majority – through outrage over antisemitism.



Months on from the events of October 7th, what is there to show for this? Claudine Gay resigned, and her role was filled by Alan Garber, someone who has expressed equal support for DEI policies, but is presumably more sensitive to antisemitism as someone who is himself Jewish. Then, Bill Ackman announced his intention to donate a million dollars to a Jewish Democrat candidate who has a long history of sponsoring and supporting bills forcing DEI policies on the corporate world. Clearly, Ackman has not had a great change of heart on anti-White DEI policies, he simply wants to correct them to better protect Jews. Leading campaigns to fire people for not properly policing antisemitism is an

extension, not a rolling back of wokeism. It is also demoralising for White people to be told they must constantly put themselves in a subordinate position to other groups – in this case elite Jews – to be allowed to get their issue in the back door. Eventually, White people will have to begin to assert their interests, as Whites, in multiracial societies. The search for “clever” ways to advocate for these interests without being seen to advocate for them is an admission that it is either morally wrong or practically unfeasible to expect the interests of White people to be represented – both of these admissions are unacceptable.

But let’s assume that even without the support of elite Jews like Ackman that there is a big opportunity to make ground pushing back against wokeism with liberal ideals. What would be wrong with this in theory? There are a couple of issues with this approach. First, the idea that race differences are so taboo that they can never be normalised among conservatives doesn’t seem very convincing. Second, and more importantly, if we deny or ignore the facts of natural racial inequalities, disparities in outcome between races cannot be explained without supposing institutional racism.

To the first point: knowledge of natural racial differences is already more common than these people would have you believe. [One study](#) found that 41% of US adults were aware of an IQ gap between White and Black Americans, and this number rose to 59% for conservative Whites.

**Table 1.** Perceptions of a US Black/White IQ Test Score Gap.

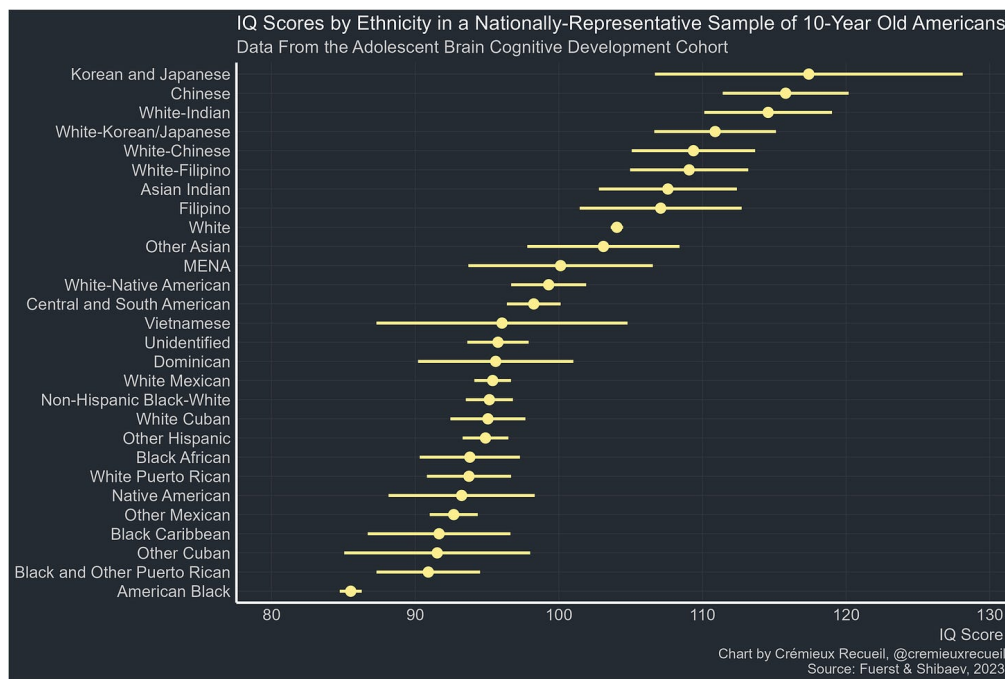
	Point estimate	84% confidence interval	95% Confidence interval	N
American National Election Studies Time Series Study 2012				
% rating White intelligence in general higher than Black intelligence in general				
Full sample	40.2	[39.0, 41.6]	[38.4, 42.2]	5510
Whites	43.2	[41.7, 44.8]	[41.1, 45.5]	3275
Blacks	19.2	[16.2, 22.6]	[15.2, 24.1]	959
White liberals	34.2	[31.3, 37.3]	[30.2, 38.5]	819
White conservatives	49.2	[46.9, 51.5]	[46.0, 52.4]	1372
General Social Survey 2016				
% rating White intelligence in general higher than Black intelligence in general				
Full sample	20.2	[18.7, 21.8]	[18.1, 22.5]	1888
Whites	19.2	[17.2, 21.3]	[16.5, 22.2]	1250
Blacks	13.1	[10.7, 15.9]	[9.9, 17.2]	308
White liberals	13.5	[10.4, 17.2]	[9.4, 18.9]	334
White conservatives	24.7	[21.7, 28.0]	[20.6, 29.4]	459
YouGov 2017				
% indicating that White Americans tend to score higher on IQ tests, on average, compared with Black Americans				
Full sample	41.2	[36.7, 45.8]	[35.0, 47.7]	508
Whites	45.6	[40.3, 50.9]	[38.3, 53.0]	373
Blacks	12.2	[7.3, 19.7]	[6.0, 23.4]	61
White liberals	33.7	[26.2, 42.1]	[23.5, 45.5]	94
White conservatives	59.1	[50.8, 66.8]	[47.5, 69.7]	138

This study was published in 2020, and in the years since, many influential conservatives have begun to amplify posts about crime, achievement, and IQ gaps between racial groups. This explicit recognition extends beyond political influencers too, with Elon Musk regularly boosting content on X that shows the disparity in crime numbers between these groups. While this doesn't say anything about natural racial differences being the cause, a good chunk of people will infer that when such glaring and consistent disparities are presented to them. Also since 2020 and the Summer of Floyd, right-wing social media has abounded in video footage of Black-on-White violence. While much of the discourse around race realism, or "Human Biodiversity", is quite technical and academic, conservatives do not need to understand complex facts about the science of genetics to acknowledge something that was an unspoken truth for their ancestors: different racial groups are different in a variety of ways to Whites, and this affects how they perform in White society.

Just a few years ago, it would have seemed unthinkable to have establishment conservatives like Charlie Kirk challenging the legacy of MLK, arguing to dismantle Civil Rights law, and saying that current immigration policy is facilitating the Great Replacement. Is it really such a stretch to think they might also acknowledge a disparity in IQ between racial groups, and tell their audience this is responsible for a large part of the disparity in outcomes between groups? After Charles Murray published his book *The Bell Curve*, which argued exactly this, he was hosted on many [mainstream talk shows](#) to discuss his controversial findings. That was only three decades ago. Back then, this seemed less controversial than talking about a great replacement of White people or opposing Civil Rights law. There is no reason the same could not occur again, especially now that platforms like X and Rumble have [allowed](#) for greater free speech on taboo topics like race.

The more fundamental problem with endorsing colourblind meritocracy is that ignoring racial differences means we are unable to offer a credible explanation for the consistent gaps in achievement across races. If all racial groups are about equal in their natural abilities, what would explain these gaps except some kind of institutional racism or Whites being advantaged by historical injustices? Race realism offers simple but powerful explanations for these gaps. To take an obvious example like IQ: so-called "twin studies" lean highly on the nature side of the nature versus nurture debate, [showing](#) that IQ is about 80% heritable. Study after study has [shown](#) significant and consistent disparities in IQ between races in multiracial societies like the United States. This gap is about 15 points between Blacks and Whites in the United States, for example. If such a gap exists, there is nothing alarming about a significant gap in representation in the education system.





We can laugh at the left's obsessive search for racism everywhere, but would this not be a reasonable assumption if we agreed on their premise of egalitarianism? Certainly, the alternative explanations put forward by conservatives for Black underachievement – welfare, rap music, Black fatherlessness (caused by what?), the bigotry of low expectations – are very unconvincing, sometimes laughably so, to any intelligent person.

Maybe you don't think this matters, since anyone concerned about things like "systemic racism" would never be on our side anyway, but the gaping hole of an explanation for racial inequality left by conservatives egalitarian premises leaves them unable to rationally defend their worldview. Many people that would typically be moderate or even conservative-leaning believe there is some remaining problem of racism holding Black people back. If people realised that the left is trying to correct a problem which cannot be corrected by affirmative action or training against implicit bias, they would see DEI policies more clearly as an attack on the White majority than simply misguided but well-intentioned policies to correct an unfair disparity.

Challenging the myth of equality is key. Here, I agree with Nathan Cofnas' basic [analysis](#) of wokeism as: *"simply what follows from taking the equality thesis of race and sex differences seriously, given a background of Christian morality."*

### The real origins of woke

Cofnas' basic moral equation for the origin of wokeness as biological egalitarianism plus a Christian informed belief about the universal dignity of the individual is a far more convincing explanation than that of Richard Hanania, who authored *The Origins of Woke* and who is starting to get a hearing from

mainstream conservatives. Hanania [argues](#) that Wokeism followed as a necessary outgrowth of Civil Rights law, which forced corporations to “go woke”, not only through shaping hiring practices, but by creating a threat of litigation under the law. This legal threat forced businesses to be proactive about buffering themselves against accusations of discrimination, employing bloated HR departments and implementing increasingly woke political correctness and diversity training. This already fails to account for hedge fund managers like Larry Fink and Bill Ackman who have shown a commitment to actively promoting DEI and affirmative action regardless of a potential decline in efficiency.

But if Hanania is correct that Civil Rights law is the prime mover of wokeism, then the colourblind meritocracy route would indeed go a long way to solving our problems, since we need only remove the legal force driving it and the crazed social justice warriors would suddenly lose their influence over the corporate world. But Western European countries went just as woke as the United States on a similar timeline, informed not by overreaching civil rights legislation, but by the same egalitarian ideals that became dominant in the US after the Second World War. In the 1950s, UNESCO published their [statements on race](#), drafted by a committee of mostly Boasian cultural anthropologists, and these were broadcast in publications like the New York Times as a definitive proclamation of racial egalitarianism. The same statements were cited in legal cases like Brown vs. Board of Education to roll back segregation. Before Civil Rights law created an oppressive structure of legal pressures on the private sector to embrace political correctness, the ruling elite had already abandoned what they viewed as antiquated ideas of race science for in vogue ideas like cultural relativism, racial egalitarianism and pluralism. Conservatives fail so abysmally at fighting wokeism not just because they unknowingly have a hand tied behind their back by Civil Rights law – they also fail to properly challenge it even in the realm of ideas, as they agree with the premises which inform it.

As Cofnas explains:

Mainstream conservatives are unable to effectively push back against wokism because *they accept the premises—both empirical and moral—that entail it*. That’s why conservatives can’t describe what wokism *is*, because that would reveal their own failure to follow their beliefs to their logical conclusion. You can see conservative writer Bethany Mandel’s brain [melt like warm ice cream](#) when she is asked to define “woke.” Other conservatives propose vague or tendentious definitions that would never be accepted by wokesters themselves. A recent *National Review* [article](#) titled “It’s Not Hard to Define Wokeness If You’re Honest” says that there are five “core elements” including

“Woke ideology *obsesses over hierarchies among identity groups*” and  
“Woke ideology *aims to be constantly evolving rather than a fixed doctrine.*”  
Conservatives cannot actually be honest and admit that wokism is what  
happens when people are serious about the equality thesis, because they  
themselves accept—or at least pretend to accept—the claim that all  
groups are innately the same.

If we accept the equality thesis and push on with arguments for a colourblind meritocracy, we will inevitably end up on the same merry-go-round of intelligent and fair-minded White people becoming convinced that the disparities that persist in the implementation of such a meritocracy are due to systemic racism, and they will continue to support or tolerate “woke” policies to try and remedy them.





## **Race realism alone is not enough**

Cofnas does a good job explaining the true origin of wokeism as a necessary outgrowth of the claims of egalitarianism, and in arguing that failure to challenge this leads to a “stupidity problem” on the right, as more intelligent Whites are drawn to politics which offer serious policy remedies to inequality. But Cofnas is not any kind of White identitarian, and he favours the Charles Murray approach of maintaining a liberal, meritocratic society while simply being honest about natural racial differences. We simply need to explain to the public that disparities between groups are quite natural and not something to be upset over. We don’t want Whites to lord it over non-Whites due to certain cognitive inequalities, but neither is it fair to punish groups like Whites, Asians and Jews for their superior performance in certain fields with affirmative action quotas. We can deliver everyone the good news that since racial egalitarianism was always a fiction, inequality between races is no big deal, and wokeism is unnecessary. Then the left can get back to focusing on more important issues like workers’ rights and environmentalism.

The Cofnas/Murray approach to fighting wokeism then, is race realism without racial identitarianism. We can acknowledge differences in races while still preserving a colourblind meritocracy and giving any individual from any group the opportunity to reach his full potential. Is this a better approach? It has more to recommend it than the first, since it is more honest, better able to explain the world, and offers a challenge to wokeism at the most fundamental level of challenging the myth of egalitarianism.

The problem, though, is that no amount of studies or argumentation will convince minority racial groups in the West that their unequal share of outcomes is fair. Generally, minorities – or their representatives, at least – will not accept a disparity in something like IQ as reflecting anything but the racism of the society which devised the tests. Regardless of what we say about race differences, all races other than White people will continue to play identity politics and seek as much advantage for their group as possible. The anti-White animus so prevalent today is not just motivated by minorities mistakenly perceiving injustices – there is evidently a deeper resentment toward White people which wokeism has simply empowered. It won’t take long examining immigration discussion on social media to find ample examples of new arrivals to the West celebrating the ethnocide of Europeans as karmic justice for their collective sin of colonialism, even if it is against countries with no imperial past like Ireland. Will any of this go away for Whites in multiracial societies like the United States if meritocracy is restored? Will White people doubling down on their commitment to colourblind politics stop “woke” racial lobbies from viewing them as oppressors?

If we removed racial preference for non-Whites in policy and Blacks began to be locked up in even greater numbers and had their representation in higher education diminish, they would demand an answer, and discussion of time-horizons and IQ gaps wouldn't cut it. While we can make many White people aware of some basic truths of race realism, many will continue to reject them as an article of faith, and for those who accept them, maintaining fair competence hierarchies in the education system isn't a very strong motive for driving social change, especially when it involves delivering some very uncomfortable truths to entire groups who feel under attack for their race. After all, isn't this much the same as the situation in the 1960s, when most Whites obviously perceived profound differences between themselves and Black Americans, but tolerated and eventually embraced the egalitarian presuppositions of Civil Rights law?



Consider the statistic earlier, which revealed that almost 60% of conservative Whites in America know that an IQ gap exists between races. Most would probably never have guessed the number is that high. Can you recall hearing a Republican politician or a popular pundit point to differences in IQ as an explanation for the achievement gap between races? Even with a majority quietly agreeing, it would be enormously controversial to go there, so this is not just a problem of a false empirical belief about egalitarianism, as Cofnas suggests. No, talking about this would be controversial because it would so shock the liberal sensibilities of conservatives. It would seem an unnecessarily harsh and limiting truth for people that genuinely do believe in the ideal of a colourblind meritocracy. It would enter into the uncomfortable territory of dividing

humanity into groups, defining individuals by their race, justifying certain prejudices, and limiting the potential of the individual.

What Cofnas' analysis is missing is an understanding of *why* Conservatives go along with the myth of racial egalitarianism: for most it is not because they genuinely believe it, but because acknowledging group differences, or using the lens of race to analyse anything, seems to them to be a violation of the most basic principles of individualism. To get over the taboo of talking about racial differences, White conservatives need to get over the taboo of talking about race as something deeper than skin colour, and that means also acknowledging that they, as Whites, have interests.

What Whites in multiracial societies need is not merely truths about race or a principled opposition to DEI policies, but a willingness to engage with both from the starting point of a White identity politics. Mere concern for fairness will not mobilise the right to match the fervour of the woke left, overlooking glaringly obvious truths about race will leave our explanation of the world incomplete, and a refusal to engage in identity politics will mean again acceding to the organised racial lobbies and anti-White factions which currently dominate Western societies.

The reality of racial differences should be presented honestly, not just to explain disparate outcomes in economics and education, but to show conservative White people that there are more fundamental differences between us and other groups which cannot be sidestepped with appeals to individualism. Facts about racial differences, like all scientific facts, are value neutral. Our goal should be to show that these truths, alongside a wealth of sociological and historical evidence, show that Whites will need collective action to navigate a multiracial society.

Then, we must make the *moral* case that White people are entitled to utter a hard “no” to the many groups who take advantage of our naive commitment to individualism and egalitarianism. Only then will we see a lasting rolling back of wokeism.